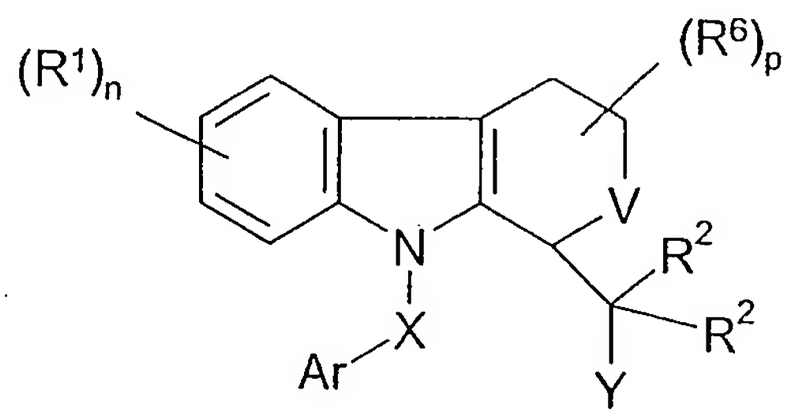
CLAIMS:

1. The use, for the manufacture of a medicament for treatment or prevention of a disease associated with the deposition of β-amyloid in the brain, of a compound of formula I:



I

wherein V represents a bond, CH_2 or CH_2CH_2;

X represents SO_2 or CHR^3 where R^3 is H or a hydrocarbon group containing up to 10 carbon atoms which is optionally substituted with halogen, CF_3, C_{1-4}alkoxy or C_{1-4}alkylthio;

Y represents CO_2H or tetrazole;

Ar represents phenyl which optionally bears up to 3 substituents independently selected from hydrocarbon groups of up to 6 carbon atoms and $(CH_2)_m$-Z where m is 0, 1 or 2 and Z represents halogen, N_3, CN, CF_3, OCF_3, OR^4, $S(O)_tR^4$ where t is 0, 1 or 2, CO_2R^4, tetrazole, $N(R^4)_2$, $NHCOR^5$, $NHCON(R^4)_2$, $CON(R^4)_2$, $SO_2N(R^4)_2$, $NHSO_2R^5$, COR^5, or $OCOR^5$;

n is 0, 1, 2 or 3;

each R^1 is independently selected from nonaromatic hydrocarbon groups of up to 6 carbon atoms and $(CH_2)_q$-W where q is 0, 1 or 2 and W represents halogen, CN, CF_3, OR^4, $N(R^4)_2$, $S(O)_tR^4$ where t is 0, 1 or 2, CO_2R^4, tetrazole, $CON(R^4)_2$, $SO_2N(R^4)_2$, COR^5, $OCOR^5$ or phenyl or heteroaryl either of which optionally bears up to 3 substituents selected from halogen, CF_3, OCF_3, CN, OH, C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{1-4}alkoxy, C_{1-4}alkylthio or C_{1-4}alkoxycarbonyl;

each R^2 is independently H or C_{1-4}alkyl; or one R^2 group together with an R^6 group attached at the same ring position as the $-C(R^2)_2$-Y moiety completes a spiro-linked hydrocarbon ring of 3-6 members;

R^4 represents H or a hydrocarbon group of up to 7 carbon atoms, optionally substituted with halogen, CN, CF_3, OH, C_{1-4}alkoxy or C_{1-4}alkoxycarbonyl; or two R^4 groups attached to the same nitrogen atom may complete a 5- or 6-membered heterocyclic ring;

R^5 represents R^4 that is other than H;

p is 0, 1 or 2; and

R^6 represents C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl or phenyl, benzyl or heteroaryl, said phenyl, benzyl or heteroaryl optionally bearing up to 3 substituents selected from halogen, CN, CF_3, OCF_3, OR^4, CO_2R^4, COR^5, $OCOR^5$ and C_{1-4}alkyl; or an R^6 group together with an R^2 group may complete a spiro-linked hydrocarbon ring as defined previously;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

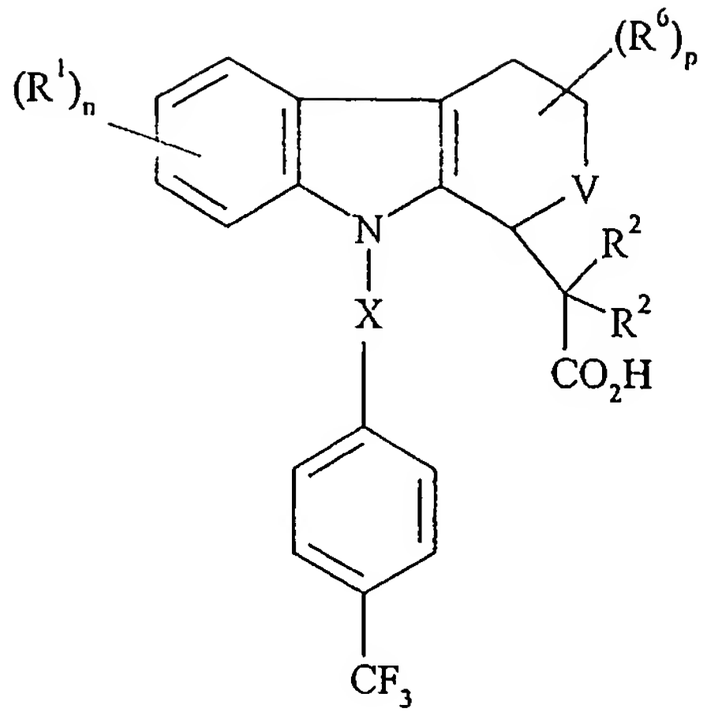
2. A method of treating or preventing a disease associated with deposition of Aβ in the brain comprising administering to a patient in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of formula I as defined in claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

3. Use according to claim 1 wherein said disease is Alzheimer's disease, cerebral amyloid angiopathy, multi-infarct dementia, dementia pugilistica or Down syndrome.

4. A compound according to formula I as defined in claim 1 wherein p is 1 or 2 and at least one R^6 represents C_{2-6} alkenyl or optionally-substituted phenyl, heteroaryl or benzyl;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

5. A compound according to formula II:



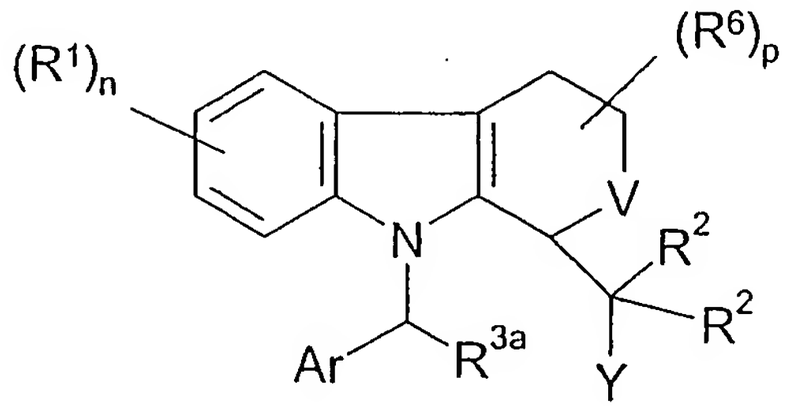
II

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, where V, X, n, p, R^1, R^2 and R^6 are as defined in claim 1;

with the proviso that if V is CH_2, X is CH_2, p is zero and each R^2 is H, then $(R^1)_n$ does not represent 6,8-difluoro.

6. A compound according to claim 4 or claim 5 wherein X is CHR^3.

7. A compound according to formula III:



III

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein R^{3a} represents a hydrocarbon group containing from 2 to 10 carbon atoms which is optionally substituted with halogen, CF_3, C_{1-4}alkoxy or C_{1-4}alkylthio; and the remaining variables are as defined in claim 1, with the proviso that R^1 does not represent SOR^4 or SO_2R^4.

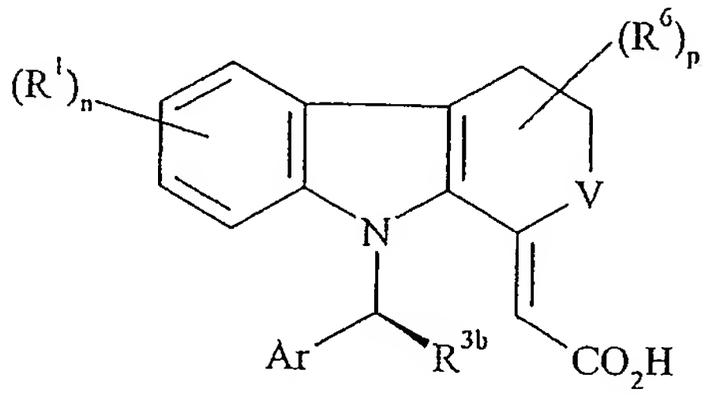
8. A compound according to claim 7 wherein Y represents CO_2H, Ar represents 4-trifluoromethylphenyl, and both R^2 groups represent H.

9. A compound according to any of claims 4-8 wherein n is 1 or 2 and each R^1 is independently selected from methyl, ethyl, isopropyl, n-butyl, t-butyl, cyclopropyl, Br, Cl, F, CN, CF_3, OCH_3, OCF_3, SCH_3, morpholin-1-yl, 4-fluorophenyl, 3,4-dichlorophenyl, 3-methylthiophenyl, 2,5-dimethylphenyl and 3-trifluoromethoxyphenyl.

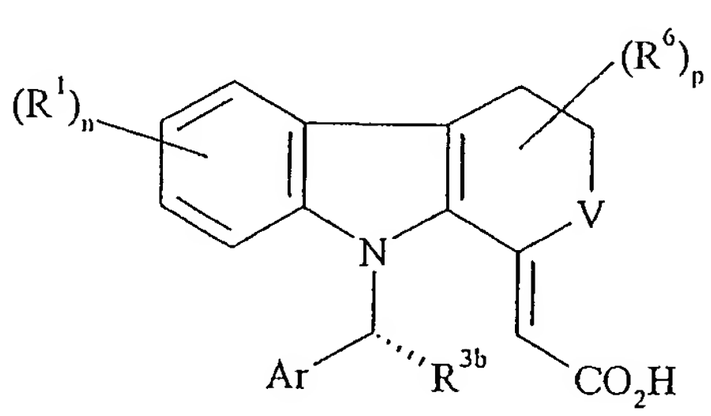
10. A compound according to any of claims 4-9 for use in treatment of the human body.

11. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to any of claims 4-9 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

12. A process for preparing a compound of formula III as defined in claim 7 comprising the step of hydrogenating a compound of formula (11a) or (11b) over a chiral $Ru(BINAP)Cl_2$ catalyst:



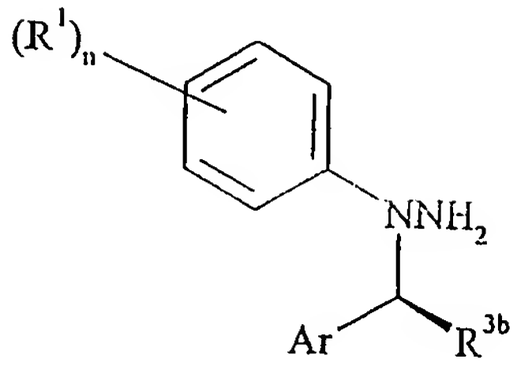
(11a)



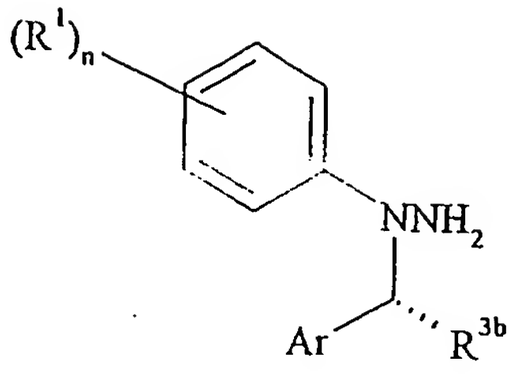
(11b)

wherein BINAP is bis(diphenylphosphino)-1,1′-binaphthyl and R^{3b} is R^3 that is other than H.

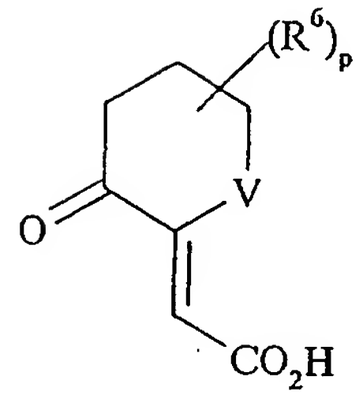
13. The process of claim 12 wherein the compound of formula (11a) or (11b) is obtained by reaction of a compound of formula (5a) or (5b) with a compound of formula (10):



(5a)



(5a)



(10)